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Battle Line

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SYMINGTON: ARCHITECT OF 'THE LOST YEARS'

On February 8, Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo) gave the Nation a horrifying example of how desperate he and other Senate Democrats are becoming in their frustrated effort to develop a 1960 issue against the Republican Administration.

At a Congressional hearing, Adm. Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, refused to agree with Symington's preconceived distortions of total U. S. military strength.

Then Symington, in a flash of irrational pique, threatened to publicize top-secret Central Intelligence Agency estimates of USSR missile strength. The CIA furnished the top-secret estimates to authorized Congressional Committees on a confidential privilege-basis.

Revealing our secret information on Russian missile strength would be an act of total, reckless irresponsibility.

The Soviets would be handed our precise estimates on a platter and this would give them an invaluable yardstick with which to measure the general accuracy of U. S. intelligence. It would also give them insight into our methods and clues on how to block our sources.

If Symington is going to treat top-secret intelligence with such disdain, it becomes the responsibility of the Democratic Leadership to see that no such information reaches his hands.

Symington has selected military matters as the core of his floundering campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomination. He thus invites examination of his personal record of accomplishment in this field--the years in which he was Secretary of the Air Force, or Assistant Secretary of War for Air in the Truman Administration.

An examination of those years--1946 through 1950--gives one possible indication why Symington is reluctant to enter presidential primaries and thereby open up that record for public examination by his Senate rivals.

In the years that he served as the Truman Administration's civilian air expert, Symington presided over "the lost years" in U. S. missile development.

As Dr. Wernher Von Braun has testified: "The United States had no ballistic missile program worth mentioning between 1945 and 1951. These six years, during which the Russian obviously laid the groundwork for their large rocket program, are irretrievably lost."

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The Air Force, under Symington, had the primary responsibility for missile development in those years. The record: In 1946, the Atlas program was started but was terminated in 1947 and was not to be resumed in any degree of intensity until the Republicans were elected in 1953.

Here are some "testimonials" to what happened to the Air Force under Symington from some of his fellow Senate Democrats:

--Sen. Lyndon Johnson (D-Tex) on July 12, 1950, three months after Symington had left the Pentagon: "During this same period, from 1948 to the present, the Air Force--supposedly our first line of defense--has steadily decreased in size and effectiveness." Symington was in charge during those years.

--Sen. Lister Hill (D-Ala) on July 22, 1953: "From 1947 to 1949, the Air Force sacrificed, entirely because of lack of money, fully half its research and development programs. The record will reveal, and a sad record it is, that in this period not one new aircraft or guided missile project was initiated by the Air Force... If in those years the Defense Department had maintained an aggressive approach to airpower research and development, we might not have found ourselves in Korean combat with obsolete, piston-engine aircraft." Symington was in charge during those years.

Here is a comparison of spending on missiles under Symington, now charging we are not spending enough, as compared to missile programs under the Republican Administration:

<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>	<u>UNDER SYMINGTON</u>	<u>UNDER GOP</u>
1947	\$ 58,000,000	--
1948	81,000,000	--
1949	98,000,000	--
1950	134,000,000	--
1951	784,000,000	--
1952	--	--
1953		\$ 1,116,000,000
1954		1,067,000,000
1955		1,470,000,000
1956		2,270,000,000
1957		4,470,000,000
1958		5,107,000,000
1959		6,913,000,000
1960		6,634,000,000
TOTALS	\$1,155,000,000	\$29,047,000,000

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